

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

OMB-01 CPR-01 /059 W

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R 200822Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2274

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MY, CH

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN REACTION TO DEATH OF CHOU EN-LAI

REF: STATE 005740

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH MALAYSIA HAS CONCENTRATED IN PAST WEEK ON DEATH OF PM RAZAK, DEATH OF CHOU EN-LAI RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION, ESPECIALLY IN PERIOD BEFORE RAZAK'S DEATH. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REACTIONS TO CHOU'S PASSING QUITE SYMPATHETIC AND IN SOME CASES EMOTIONAL. END SUMMARY.

2. DEATH OF PM RAZAK HAS HELD ATTENTION OF MALAYSIANS SINCE JAN 14, TO CERTAIN EXTENT OVERSHADOWING REACTION HERE TO DEATH OF CHOU EN-LAI, BUT OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL RESPONSE TO CHOU'S DEATH NOTEWORTHY, ESPECIALLY BEFORE
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RAZAK'S DEATH AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS.

DAY AFTER CHOU'S DEATH ANNOUNCED ON JAN 9,
IN FORM CONDOLENCE MESSAGES FROM PM
RAZAK (OBVIOUSLY WRITTEN IN K.L. WHILE PM ON
DEATHBED IN LONDON) AND ACTING PM HUSSEIN, GOM
PAID TRIBUTE TO DECEASED CHINESE LEADER. EDITORIAL
TREATMENT IN CHINESE, MALAY AND ENGLISH PRESS
UNIVERSALLY LAUDATORY, WITH EMPHASIS ON CHOU'S
ROLE DURING PM RAZAK'S VISIT TO CHINA IN MAY 1974.
LARGE DELEGATION, INCLUDING NUMBER OF CABINET
MINISTERS OF ALL RACES, FOLLOWED ACTING PM HUSSEIN
IN CALLING ON PRC EMBASSY TO SIGN CONDOLENCE BOOK.
(WE NOTE LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION AT CONDOLENCE BOOK
SIGNING VIRTUALLY DUPLICATED BY PRC AT MALAYSIAN
EMBASSY PEKING CEREMONY FOR RAZAK SEVERAL DAYS LATER.)
VIRTUALLY ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, INCLUDING SOVIET
AMBASSADOR, ACCORDING TO CHINESE PRESS, ALSO CALLED
AT PRC EMBASSY. (U.S. AMBASSADOR SIGNED BOOK ON
SECOND DAY BOOK WAS OPEN.)

3. PRIVATE REACTION TO CHOU'S DEATH WAS AS SYMPA-
THETIC AS OFFICIAL, AND IN SOME CASES MUCH MORE
EMOTIONAL. LONG LINES OF CHINESE GATHERED
AT PRC EMBASSY TO PAY RESPECTS AND CHINESE
PAPERS CARRIED PICTURES OF PERSONS IDENTIFIED
ONLY AS "LOCAL WORKERS AND PEASANTS" WEeping.
COMMENT: PRESENCE OF SO MANY LOCAL CHINESE AT
PRC EMBASSY EXTREMELY UNUSUAL BECAUSE GOM SECURITY
APPARATUS NORMALLY CLOSELY MONITORS EMBASSY
AND NOTES ALL WHO ENTER; THUS VISITING PRC EMBASSY
IS CONSIDERED RISKY BY MANY MALAYSIAN CHINESE
SINCE THEY FEAR THAT THEY WILL BECOME SUSPECT AS
SUBVERSIVES IN EYES OF GOM.

4. SCENE AT OBSERVANCES FOR CHOU, WITH LARGE
NUMBERS OF CHINESE, WAS MARKED CONTRAST WITH
CROWDS AT RITES FOR PM RAZAK, WHO WERE LARGELY
MALAYS. THIS CONTRAST, HOWEVER, PERHAPS ONLY A
SUPERFICIAL PHENOMENON IN THAT MALAYS HAVE NO
PARTICULAR REASON TO MOURN DEATH OF CHINESE LEADER,
WHILE MANY CHINESE PROBABLY BELIEVED THEIR PRESENCE IN
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LARGELY MALAY CROWD VIEWING BODY AT PARLIAMENT
WOULD BE RESENTED AND UNPLEASANTNESS MIGHT RESULT.
ALSO, A GOOD PART OF CROWD AT PRC EMBASSY WAS MADE
UP OF MEMBERS OF GUILDS AND ASSOCIATIONS AND ONE
GROUP OF OVER ONE HUNDRED WAS IDENTIFIED IN PRESS
AS MEMBERS OF MALAYSIAN CHINA GOODS IMPORTERS'
ASSOCIATION. ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF SUCH GROUPS
PERHAPS WEIGHED AS HEAVILY IN THEIR

MOTIVATION AS TRUE FEELINGS OF CONDOLENCE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, DEATHS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KUALA00344
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760021-0443
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760141/aaaabkms.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 5740
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <13 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MALAYSIAN REACTION TO DEATH OF CHOU EN-LAI
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MY, CH, (CHOU EN LAI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006